

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/915,301

Examiner

Susanna M. Diaz

Applicant(s)

RIGGS ET AL.

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to Applicant's amendment filed November 24, 2004 and the attached Examiner's Amendment.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-14, 16-20 and 22-45.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 27 July 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 - * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 12032004.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

Susanna Diaz
SUSANNA M. DIAZ
PRIMARY EXAMINER
AU 3623

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Robert Bauer (Reg. No. 34,487) on December 3, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

Please see attachment labeled as "Examiner's Amendment."

Reasons for Allowance

2. Claims 1-14, 16-20, and 22-45 are allowed.

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art of record is Lettich et al. (US 2002/0049622), Rojek ("How Baxter Improved Data Exports"), and Official Notice. Lettich discloses a purchasing module evaluating proposals by shippers for respective shipments of goods and awarding contracts for the shipments to the plurality of carriers (¶¶ 96, 110-130, 183, 199), a contract administration module maintaining information relating to the status of proposals received and contracts awarded by the purchasing module (¶¶ 110-130, 183, 199), a scheduling module scheduling shipments according to the awarded contracts (¶¶ 196, 199), a shipment management module tracking the status of shipments awarded by the purchasing module and scheduled by said scheduling module (¶¶ 132, 200, 201), and a financial module authorizing payments according to the status of shipments tracked by the shipment management module (¶¶ 187-188, 195, 222, 249, 285). Furthermore, as explained in the previous art rejection, the Examiner asserts that Lettich's shipment management module includes a database logging and storing all of the shipment records of the shipments awarded by the purchasing module and scheduled by said scheduling module (¶¶ 110-130, 183, 199); however, Lettich fails to expressly teach that the disclosed database is relational *per se*. Rojek outlines the details of how Baxter Export "decided to create a data warehousing and decision support system that would store shipping transaction data and provide detailed

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performance analysis" (¶¶ 1, 5), thereby addressing the use of relational databases.

Yet, neither Lettich nor Rojek expressly teaches that "the shipment management module includes an audit system allowing changes to shipment records in the relational database to be controlled and tracked per audit protocols and viewing of the history and changes made to/during a shipment." The Examiner asserts that it is old and well-known in the art of databases to maintain a history of changes that were made to information stored in a database, thereby addressing details of an audit system. While all of the modules and corresponding functionality recited in claim 1 are deemed to be old and well-known individually, the Examiner submits that the combination of all of these modules along with their corresponding functionality in an integrated logistics system (as recited in claim 1) is not taught or suggested by the prior art references of record. Therefore, claim 1 and dependent claims 2-14, 16-20, and 22-45 are deemed to be allowable over the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (703) 305-1337. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Susanna M. Diaz
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623
December 3, 2004

09/15/301

Examiner's Amendment

Atty. Docket No. 6065/1US

(Currently Amended)

1. An integrated logistics system for managing the shipments of goods supplied from a plurality of different shippers by a plurality of carriers, said system comprising:

a purchasing module evaluating proposals by shippers for respective shipments of goods and awarding contracts for the shipments to the plurality of carriers;

a contract administration module maintaining information relating to the status of proposals received and contracts awarded by the purchasing module, ~~said contract administration module including or being connected to a first database storing said information relating to the status of proposals received and contracts awarded by the purchasing module;~~

a scheduling module scheduling shipments according to the awarded contracts;

a shipment management module tracking the status of shipments awarded by the purchasing module and scheduled by said scheduling module, said shipment management module including or being connected to a relational database logging and storing the shipment records of said shipments, wherein changes to said shipment records in the first relational database are allowed to be controlled and tracked per audit protocols and the history and changes made to/during a shipment are allowed to be viewed; and

a financial module authorizing payments according to the status of shipments tracked by the shipment management module; ~~and~~

a network configured to transfer information between said shipment management ~~contract administration~~ module ~~to and~~ at least one module of a group consisting of said purchasing module, said scheduling module, said contract administration ~~shipment management~~ module, and said financial module, said at least one module including or being connected to a second database; and

at least one computer, said at least one computer connected to said network and configured to execute a computer program of said purchasing module, contract administration module, scheduling module, shipment management module, and financial module, to process said information transferred by said network.

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(original) 2. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of carriers includes ship owners and the logistics system includes a tanker planning module.

(original) 3. An integrated logistics system according to claim 2, wherein the tanker planning module includes a partitioned relational database storing collaborative data relating to shippers, freight forwarders and ship owners.

(Currently Amended) 4. An integrated logistics system according to claim 3, wherein access to each partition in the relational database of the tanker planning module is selectively controlled and managed so that contracts between shippers and ship owners can be awarded by the purchasing module without revealing the confidential information of one party to the other.

(original) 5. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, further comprising a data warehouse module storing operations data received from the shipment management module and commercial data received from the financial module.

(original) 6. An integrated logistics system according to claim 5, wherein the data warehouse module selects, filters, aggregates and repackages said operations data and commercial data to generate data mining, metrics and predetermined reports, and customizable reports.

(original) 7. An integrated logistics system according to claim 6, wherein the data warehouse module includes a front end interface offering secured access and controlled transfer between the data warehouse module in computer readable format.

(original) 8. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, further comprising a carrier management module which tracks the performance of carriers and generates ratings of the carriers.

(original) 9. An integrated logistics system according to claim 8, wherein the carrier management module receives information from the front end interface of a data warehouse module.

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(Currently Amended) 10. An integrated logistics system according to claim 8, wherein the carrier management module receives metric requirements from ~~the~~ contract administration module.

(Original) 11. An integrated logistics system according to claim 8, wherein the carrier management module receives exception information indicating shipment problems from an exception queue in the shipment management module.

(Original) 12. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, further comprising a regulatory module collecting information from other modules of the system and providing reports related to health and safety or governmental regulations.

(Original) 13. An integrated logistics system according to claim 12, wherein the purchasing module blocks an award of a shipment to a carrier according to information maintained in the regulatory module.

(Previously Presented) 14. An integrated logistics system according to claim 12, wherein the regulatory module accesses the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) information maintained in the Enterprise Resource Planning software of a shipper.

(Canceled) 15. ~~An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, wherein the shipment management module includes a relational database logging and storing all of the shipment records of the shipments awarded by the purchasing module and scheduled by said scheduling module.~~

(Currently Amended) 16. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module includes a data management tool managing the viewing and/or updates of the data in the first relational database in a secure change environment.

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(Currently Amended) 17. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the first relational database in the shipment management module receives information from the shipper and carrier for each shipment, the contract administration module, and the scheduling module.

(Currently Amended) 18. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module receives or computes position data to audit and/or calculate current information on detention and to validate charges for detention.

(Currently Amended) 19. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module computes inventory data to calculate the position and amount of inventory in the shipments tracked by the shipment management module.

(Currently Amended) 20. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module provides information on the location and status of equipment of a given shipper or carrier.

(Canceled) 21. ~~An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module includes an audit system allowing changes to shipment records in the relational database to be controlled and tracked per audit protocols and viewing of the history and changes made to/during a shipment.~~

(Currently Amended) 22. An integrated logistics system according to claim 15, wherein the shipment management module forwards an electronic authorization for payments to the financial module according to the shipment records in the first relational database.

(Original) 23. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, wherein the contract administration module permits minor changes to a contract awarded by the purchasing module by coordinating change requests and change response messages between the shipper and the carrier.

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- (original) 24. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1, wherein the scheduling module receives electronic data from a shipper for a shipment and forwards said data to the corresponding carrier via a distributed communications network and XML.
- (original) 25. An integrated logistics system according to claim 24, wherein the scheduling module matches and synchronizes the timing of notification, booking or offer of the shipment with the carrier and automatically notifies the shipper that the shipment has been confirmed.
- (Currently Amended) 26. An integrated logistics system according to claim 1 ~~method of arranging for the shipment of goods by one of a plurality of carriers, wherein said purchasing module method comprising:~~
maintaining carrier information relating to each one of said plurality of carriers ~~in a centralized logistics system;~~
receiving a proposal for the shipment of goods supplied from a shipper, said proposal including shipping information relating to the shipment of the goods and transaction information relating to the contract terms for the shipment;
evaluating the proposal to select a carrier from among said plurality of carriers; and
creating an electronic abstract of a contract between the shipper and the selected carrier for the shipment of goods identified in the proposal.
- (Currently Amended) 27. An integrated logistics system ~~method of arranging for the shipment of goods as recited in claim 26, further comprising:~~
communicating with the selected carrier to receive a response regarding the electronic abstract of the contract;
creating an electronic abstract of the response received from the selected carrier; and
confirming selection of the selected carrier with the shipper using the electronic abstract of the response received from the selected carrier.
- (Currently Amended) 28. An integrated logistics system ~~method of arranging for the shipment of goods as~~

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recited in claim 26, wherein the carrier information includes qualification information for each one of the plurality of carriers.

(Currently Amended) 29. ~~An integrated logistics system method of arranging for the shipment of goods~~ as recited in claim 28, wherein the qualification information indicates the ability of the plurality of carriers to ship different categories of goods.

(Currently Amended) 30. ~~An integrated logistics system method of arranging for the shipment of goods~~ as recited in claim 29, wherein the different categories of goods include chemicals.

(Currently Amended) 31. ~~An integrated logistics system method of arranging for the shipment of goods~~ as recited in claim 26, wherein the evaluation further comprises:
sending an electronic abstract of the proposal to the potential carriers;
evaluating responses to the electronic abstract of the proposal received from the potential carriers, said responses including shipping information supplied by the carrier relating to the shipment of the goods or transaction information relating to the contract terms for the shipment;
selecting one of the potential carriers for the shipment on the basis of the responses to the electronic abstract of the proposal and the carrier information ~~maintained in said centralized logistics system~~.

(Currently Amended) 32. ~~An integrated logistics system as recited in claim 1 method of arranging for the shipment of goods from an origin to a destination~~, said scheduling module ~~method~~ comprising:
retrieving routing information for a plurality of different transport modes;
retrieving carrier information relating to each one of a plurality of different carriers for each one of said plurality of different transport modes;
determining a routing for the shipment of goods from said origin to said destination based on said retrieved routing information; and
scheduling, via a computer network, the shipment of goods from said origin to said destination based on said carrier information.

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(Currently Amended) 33. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein the scheduled shipment of goods from said origin to said destination is scheduled to use at least two different transport modes.

(Currently Amended) 34. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein the logistics ~~system~~ ~~scheduled shipment of goods is arranged using~~ a third party logistics system.

(Currently Amended) 35. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein one of said plurality of different transport modes comprises truck transport.

(Currently Amended) 36. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 34, wherein said carrier information includes information relating to bulk truck carriers, truckload carriers, and less than truckload carriers.

(Currently Amended) 37. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 34, wherein said shipment is scheduled using information unique to truck transport.

(Currently Amended) 38. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein one of said plurality of different transport modes comprises rail transport.

(Currently Amended) 39. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 37, wherein said shipment is scheduled using information which is unique to rail transport.

(Currently Amended) 40. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein one of said plurality of different transport modes comprises containership transport.

(Currently Amended) 41. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 39, wherein said shipment is scheduled using information which is unique to containership transport.

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(Currently Amended) 42. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein one of said plurality of different transport modes comprises bulk tanker transport.

(Currently Amended) 43. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 41, wherein said shipment is scheduled using information which is unique to bulk tanker transport.

(Currently Amended) 44. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 32, wherein one of said plurality of different transport modes comprises air freight.

(Currently Amended) 45. An integrated logistics system ~~method~~ according to claim 44, wherein said shipment is scheduled using information which is unique to air freight.